

BEFORE A POET KNOWS WHAT SHE IS

Eyes wild with light as a puma's,  
blossoming breasts up-tilted to summer,  
topaz-haired Erato in faded jeans.

Marriage pleas began early, hoarse voices  
caressing her ear with promises--  
a good life, children, a car of her own.

Arms and mouths she liked,  
tuxedos and bottled forest scents,  
new sums to sift at the deep waking.

She ran alone to wrap night around her.

Too unsure to say how warlock winds  
hurried her blood, how river tongues rhymed  
with hers and promised more. Too new

to tell how strings and reeds in minor keys  
leaned her on shoulders of granite,  
closed her eyes with pine breath.

And her unnamed babies  
already lay in an outgrown box  
pressing blue gentians from ditches.